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LETTER DATED 27 MAY 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDONESIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Indonesia has taken note with interest of the timely submission of the report of the Secretary-General on the question of East Timor (S/1999/595), in accordance with paragraph 8 of Security Council resolution 1236 (1999). During the visit of the United Nations assessment team to East Timor, upon which the report is based, Indonesia spared no effort to render full cooperation to the team, including providing the necessary facilities for the deployment of the proposed United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET). It is pertinent to observe that the team's findings acknowledged the forthcoming and fruitful cooperation extended by the Government of Indonesia in this regard.

At this time, Indonesia will refrain from making detailed observations on the report of the Secretary-General. However, it would like to point out certain aspects.

(a) With regard to the situation on the ground, the above-mentioned report depicts an imbalanced picture of the prevailing realities. It would be misleading to state that the security situation in East Timor is a result of the continuation of acts of violence and intimidation perpetrated solely by one segment of society. The reality is that such violence has been committed by both sides. For example, the report is silent on the killing of four soldiers of East Timorese origin on 16 May 1999 in Bobonaro's Lolote district when they were ambushed by anti-integration elements. Also a brutal killing took place when a serviceman in the Baucau district was axed to death in his own house while the perpetrators fled after spraying the neighbourhood with bullets and torching three other houses. In addition, the cases of intimidation, harassment and violence by anti-integration elements against teachers, nurses and doctors are well chronicled, thereby hampering their much-needed services in East Timor. This is not to justify or to excuse the perpetration of such acts by any one side for they are unacceptable under any circumstances. Rather, it is a mere description of facts; needless to say, acknowledgement of this reality should be stressed, as a balanced report is crucial for progress to be made in establishing an atmosphere conducive to the holding of the popular consultation.

(b) Furthermore, Indonesia rejects unsubstantiated allegations based on the beliefs of observers, whose sources of information are unverifiable,

suggesting acquiescence by elements of the Indonesian army in the acts of the so-called militias. There are now many United Nations officials in East Timor and the report, therefore, should be based on their information and not on the beliefs of so-called observers. Indonesia considers these charges to be highly serious; they should not be made lightly. The commitment of the Government of Indonesia to the 5 May 1999 agreements is unequivocal and it is determined to see through the successful implementation of those agreements. The serious intent of the Indonesian Government to fulfil its commitment is also evidenced by the establishment of a special task force at the ministerial level on 11 May 1999, to monitor and ensure the safe and peaceful implementation of the popular consultation to be held under United Nations auspices. This task force is headed by the Coordinating Minister for Political Affairs, and its members consist of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister for Home Affairs, the Minister for Defence/Chief of the Armed Forces, the Minister for Justice, the Chief of the National Police and the Head of the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency.

(c) As is well known, the Commission on Peace and Stability was established in Dili, on 21 April 1999, in response to the need to secure a conducive environment to hold the popular consultation. Thus, to portray a scenario, as contained in the said report of the Secretary-General, of the inability of anti-integration groups to participate freely in the Commission is misleading. In this regard, it is pertinent to note that the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ali Alatas, held a meeting on 15 May 1999 with both pro-integration and anti-integration groups to explain the substance of wide-ranging autonomy as contained in the 5 May 1999 agreements, as well as to provide an opportunity for both sides to freely express their views. They were not apprehensive about attending that meeting.

Concurrently, the Indonesian Government has consistently extended its support to the holding of a reconciliation meeting among the various segments of East Timorese society, as proposed by the Bishop of Dili, to promote harmony and cooperation, thereby contributing to a tranquil and peaceful environment in East Timor.

These efforts by Indonesia reflect its firm support for the effective functioning and successful implementation of the proposed mandate of UNAMET in East Timor.

Indonesia requests that the Security Council should take into account the present letter and the forthcoming and fruitful cooperation extended by the Government of Indonesia as acknowledged by the Secretary-General in his report.

It would be highly appreciated if you could circulate this letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Makarim WIBISONO
Ambassador
Permanent Representative